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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Warren Christopher, Acting *WC*.

Panama Canal. I met with Jack Murphy today to discuss plans for gaining House approval of the implementing legislation. Murphy said the crucial vote would probably occur on a motion by George Hansen to recommit the Murphy bill to committee, or on a substitute Hansen bill which would contravene the treaties.

We had a good talk, and (I hope) established a basis for working more closely together in subsequent stages. Murphy urged us to undertake a major educational campaign to convince House members, particularly Republicans, that the treaties cannot be overturned and that the Hansen approach would jeopardize efficient operation of the Canal. Ed Derwinski's excellent piece on the Op Ed page of the POST today, entitled "Panama: from No to Yes," should be helpful with Republicans.

Bill Rogers has been asked by Panama President Royo to come to Panama to provide counsel on the implementing legislation. I gave Bill our appraisal of the legislative situation this afternoon. It will be good to have his wise and calming counsel available to the Panamanians.

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Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

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Southern Lebanon. The Lebanese Army force was deployed to southern Lebanon today. Haddad's artillery continued to shell UN positions in protest until about 7:00 p.m. our time. A Norwegian UN soldier was killed and another wounded in today's shelling. An American officer serving as a UN observer was briefly held by Haddad's forces and released only after Israeli intervention.

At the UN, work is continuing on Waldheim's report to the Security Council on the implementation of UN resolutions on Lebanon. We understand Begin's decision to cooperate with UNIFIL is likely to soften criticism of Israel in the report. The possibility of Security Council action will depend on whether the shelling resumes tomorrow.

The Shah. A campaign remains in progress to change our position with respect to the Shah's admission to the U.S. John McCloy, following up conversations with Cy and Zbig and a long letter to me, is continuing to call influential people throughout the country. We understand that McCloy's effort continues to be stimulated by Henry Kissinger and by the efforts of Ardeshir Zahedi.

The Shah has turned down Panama. We are awaiting a response to an inquiry made through CIA channels to President Lopez Portillo on behalf of the Shah.

Our belief that we must encourage the Shah to go elsewhere, at least for the time being, is further strengthened by Khomeini's verbal attacks on American influence and the withdrawal of two-thirds of the Iranian guard force from our Embassy compound. A new evaluation has just come in from Tehran confirming our assessment that the safety of official and unofficial Americans would be jeopardized if the Shah comes here.

Argentina. I saw Ambassador Castro today to discuss the recent significant improvements in the human rights situation in Argentina. In the first months of 1979, the Argentines have almost eliminated the abductions by official security units which had occurred at a rate of almost 50 per month in 1978.

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They appear to be investigating the few reports of recent ~~abductions~~ that have been received. The ~~Argentine~~ Supreme Court is also beginning to play a more active role in pressing the regime for information on missing persons. We believe these and other encouraging developments are partly attributable to our policy of pressing firmly for improvements and to the anticipated visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (now scheduled for late next month).

U.S.-Mexico Consultative Mechanism. U.S. participants in six of the eight working groups have now had organizational meetings and are preparing for meetings with their Mexican counterparts in April and May.

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